

RB 5811
AN ACT CONCERNING BATTERY CAGES AND EGG LAYING HENS

Senator Meyer, Representative Roy and members of the committee:

My name is Tom Schlink and I am Secretary Treasurer of Teamsters Local 493. I would like to speak against RB 5811, specifically the bill pertaining to caging egg-laying hens in Connecticut.

The towns of Bozrah, Franklin and Lebanon and Colchester are home to the largest producer of eggs in New England: Kofkoff Farms. In 2003 it was estimated by the DECD, that they contribute over \$160 million to the Connecticut economy, 300 plus jobs including 25 Teamsters jobs, and approximately \$500,000 in local taxes to the Towns of Bozrah, Franklin, Lebanon and Colchester. At a local level, these farms contribute numerous donations to local charitable causes from playscape construction to fundraiser breakfasts, just to name a few.

If HB 5811 is enacted, the ending of caged laying hens will effectively force Kofkoff Egg to move their operations out of Connecticut, causing the loss of jobs, tax revenue and related businesses throughout the region, ending yet another of CT's significant agricultural industries.

The motivation for raising this legislation is clear, bring an end to animal agriculture. We have enough problems retaining jobs in Connecticut and this legislation would cause the loss of over 300 jobs, not to mention the many indirect jobs in businesses that Kofkoff relies on every day: electrical suppliers, plumbing suppliers, propane distribution, and numerous smaller and mid-sized companies who support them. The railroad would also curtail their Eastern Connecticut operations which transport grain to Kofkoff's feed mill. The closing of these farms will be felt far and wide, here in Connecticut, and throughout the northeast.

I speak with the Kofkoff management team on a regular basis, sometimes daily. They are a valued, much needed business and a good neighbor to the towns they operate in. With so many challenges already facing them as they struggle to meet the ever-increasing expenses and expectations of the people they feed, we cannot afford to jeopardize the farm or the business of agriculture in Connecticut.

I ask you to defeat this effort to force them out of Connecticut.



Tom Schlink
Secretary Treasurer
Teamsters Local 493